

Arab wheat imports to continue

ABU DHABI (R) — Arab demand for wheat is expected to rise by 4.5 million tonnes to 37 million tonnes a year by the year 2000, more than double the region's production, the Dubai Chamber of Commerce said Friday. Arab states produced about 10.3 million tonnes of wheat in 1980 and the total was expected to reach 17.5 million tonnes by the end of the century, the chamber said in a report. "Arab countries are still largely depending on imports for their food needs, with wheat and coarse grain imports currently standing at \$15 billion," it said. "With the estimated year-2000 levels of production and consumption, Arab food self-sufficiency will not exceed 47.3 per cent." But the report said some states, such as Saudi Arabia, had managed to attain self-sufficiency. Production in Iraq was expected to reach 93.6 per cent of domestic demand by 2000. It said Tunisia, Libya and Sudan were expected to meet between 79 and 89 per cent of their local wheat needs by then. The report marks Arab Loaf Day on July 16. The 1984 Arab grain conference in Amman set the date as a reminder of the vast gap between production and demand in the region.

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AROUND THE WORLD...

Canadian delegation in Iran

NICOSIA (R) — A Canadian delegation arrived in Tehran Friday for talks with Iranian officials on normalising relations. Tehran Radio reported. The radio gave no details. Tehran and Ottawa last month started talks on improving diplomatic ties soured in 1980 when Canada withdrew its diplomats from Tehran after they spirited six U.S. diplomats out of Iran.

PLO Central Council to meet in Baghdad

BAGHDAD (AP) — The Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) Central Council will meet in Baghdad next week to discuss Syrian support for a Palestinian splinter group that routed Fatah fighters in Beirut, according to a spokesman for the organisation. Bassam Abu Sharif, spokesman for PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat, told the AP that the meeting will also focus on the developments in the uprising on the Israeli-occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip.

Israeli minister threatens to quit

TEL AVIV (R) — Israeli Finance Minister Moshe Nissim threatened to resign Friday over a wage settlement offered by Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir to striking doctors who have crippled health services, Nissim aides said. Shamir has been unable to persuade Nissim to drop his opposition to the settlement, which would give doctors an extra five per cent for operations performed during overtime.

Iranians turned back at Cyprus checkpoint

NICOSIA (R) — A group of Iranians believed to be refugees were turned back when they tried to cross into government-controlled south Cyprus from the breakaway northern republic, the government said Friday. About a dozen people thought to be from one family had tried to cross from the Turkish-Cypriot north to the Greek-Cypriot south through the British base at Dhekelia, officials said. The incident happened last week but was only disclosed Friday.

Rajiv Gandhi visits Spain

MADRID (AP) — Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi of India arrived in Madrid Friday on a two-day official visit to Spain. Gandhi and his wife, Sonia, were greeted at the airport by Foreign Minister Francisco Fernandez Ordóñez. The foreign minister told reporters that the visit held "great importance" for both countries "due to the possibilities of increasing trade."

Tories hold seat in by-election boost

LONDON (R) — Britain's ruling Conservative Party emerged narrow victors Friday from a parliamentary by-election test which the opposition Labour Party also claimed as a boost to its fortunes. A strong performance from the Labour candidate slashed the Conservative majority from 4,447 in last year's general election to only 815 votes in Thursday's ballot for the London seat of Kensington. Conservative candidate Dudley Fishburn polled 9,829 votes.

3 UAE airbus victims flown home

DUBAI (R) — The bodies of three United Arab Emirates (UAE) citizens killed when the United States cruiser Vincennes shot down an Iranair Airbus over the Gulf July 3 have been flown home, airport officials said Friday. The bodies of Badreya Al Shada, 25, Fatima Amin, 46, and her 11-year-old daughter Sameen were brought to Dubai Thursday night from Tehran where 14 other UAE victims have been buried, they said.

Airliner downing disrupts hostage talks*

BEIRUT (AP) — The U.S. navy's downing of an Iranian jetliner interrupted alleged U.S.-Iranian talks on the release of American hostages in Lebanon, the magazine Al Shara reported Friday. It said the talks between "American and Iranian negotiators ... were held in a European country and covered many details." The report said: "A number of American hostages were to be released in south Beirut in return for a public change in the American political stand on the Gulf war in favour of Iran."

Dutch prime minister to visit Israel

TEL AVIV (AP) — Dutch Prime Minister Ruud Lubbers, the first foreign head of government to visit Israel since the Palestinian uprising began in the occupied territories, will relay his government's criticism of Israel's handling of the rebellion, a Dutch official said Friday. "The uprising will certainly be an important topic of discussion during the prime minister's visit. He will relay the concerns of the Dutch people and listen very carefully to Israeli leaders," Dutch Ambassador Jan Van Roijen said in an interview. Van Roijen said the three-day visit, which begins Sunday, was initially planned in October but Lubbers delayed it for several months because of the uprising.

Turkish forces search for rebels

DIYARBAKIR, Turkey (R) — More than 1,000 troops scoured mountain slopes in southeast Turkey Friday for Kurdish rebels who killed two soldiers in a two-day clash, sources in the area said. Soldiers helped by hundreds of civilian village guards fanned out across Cudi Mountain, near Sirnak in Surt province, in their hunt for rebels of the Marxist Kurdish Workers Party (PKK). The sources said the fighting, which broke out Wednesday, seemed to die down after sporadic exchanges of fire early Friday. Troops backed by helicopters began their search around noon on the mountain, about 30 kilometres north of the Iraqi and Syrian borders.

New Niger premier named

NIAMEY, Niger (AP) — General Ali Saibou Friday named a new premier and 12 new ministers in the second government shuffle since Niger's leader came to power in November, authorities announced. Saibou conferred the premiership on Niger's Ambassador to Canada Mamane Oumarou, a former premier and ambassador to Canada since October. He replaces Hamid Al Gabid, named secretary general to the Organisation of Islamic Conference (OIC). Nine ministers were removed, including Foreign Minister Sani Bako. He was replaced by Allele Elbadji Habibou, who headed the ministry of mines and energy in the previous government, the announcement said.

Evren returns home from visit to Britain

ANKARA (R) — President Kenan Evren returned to Turkey Friday after a four-day state visit to Britain. He was the first Turkish head of state to visit Britain since 1967.

Greece hopes for full ties with Israel

ATHENS (R) — Greek Foreign Minister Karolos Papoulias said Thursday he hoped for an improvement in the situation in the Israeli-occupied territories so Greece could move towards full diplomatic relations with Israel. "I hope for better moments in the future which will help the Greek government to pursue its road to normalisation of relations with Israel," he told reporters.

Expatriates back policy of 'open bridges'

By Salameh B. Ne'matt
Jordan Times Economics
Correspondent

AMMAN — Representatives here of about one million Jordanian expatriates have given their full backing to the Kingdom's "open bridges" policy with the aim of strengthening the organic and continuing links that enhance the steadfastness of our people in the occupied Arab territories.

A statement drafted by expatriates attending the conference praised Jordan's "effective role on the local, Arab and international levels in support of the Palestinian people's intifada against Israeli occupation practices."

They paid tribute to His Majesty King Hussein's continuous

historic responsibilities vis-à-vis the Palestine question."

The conferees backed the Kingdom's "open bridges" policy with the aim of strengthening the organic and continuing links that enhance the steadfastness of our people in the occupied Arab territories.

The expatriates backed the King's "historic proposal to Arab leaders for the setting up of Arab armies to confront challenges to the Arab Nation, beginning with the Israeli occupation of Arab territories."

The King has proposed setting up an Arab rapid deployment force to defend Arab soil and protect Arab interests anywhere in the Arab World.

He has said the Jordanian Armed Forces would be honoured to serve within the ranks of the called-for force. In remarks to dignitaries and officials at the southern town of Tafith in May, the King renewed the call and said: "Let us hope that the near future will witness the birth of the rapid deployment force which would serve as a nucleus of an Arab army that can offer proper defence for the Arab homeland."

The expatriate conference's backing for the "open bridges" policy came in the wake of the Algiers Arab summit conference which backed Jordan's role in supporting the steadfastness of Palestinians in the occupied territories and named the PLO as the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people in the negotiations.

Sheikh Saad, who is also crown prince of Kuwait, said the Palestinian uprising in the Israeli-occupied West Bank and Gaza was a strong exhibition of the determination of the Palestinians to regain their freedom."

Sheikh Saad, on a week-long visit to Washington, met President Ronald Reagan Tuesday and Monday with Defence Secretary Frank Carlucci and Deputy Secretary of State John Whitehead.

Shultz is on a trip to the Far East and is unlikely to have another chance to go to the Middle East until September.

The prime minister of Kuwait said Wednesday that Shultz would make a fifth trip to the Middle East this year to push his plan for Arab-Israeli negotiations.

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Conference supports call for Arab army

Israeli army orders

W. Bank schools closed

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (Agencies) —

The Israeli occupation authorities Friday ordered the closure of all 1,200 schools in the occupied West Bank next week in an attempt to curb Palestinian student protests.

The army meanwhile kept more than 80,000 West Bank residents under curfew and ringed mosques in Gaza City to prevent demonstrations by worshippers at Friday prayers.

Palestinian sources said the Israeli "civil administration" for the West Bank ordered that final examinations would start Saturday and all schools would close next Thursday in a move to stop demonstrations and clashes between troops and pupils.

Israel reopened the schools only in June, after closures of up to five months, and extended the term until mid-August to allow the 300,000 students more time to study for examinations.

Israeli and Palestinian sources said authorities decided to end schooling for the academic year next week because of continued student protests.

But an Israeli spokesman said authorities were merely ending the academic year early.

He said the move was "a technical decision" unrelated to the seven-month-old uprising which has drawn much of its support from teenagers in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. A total of 231 Palestinians have died in the uprising.

A United Nations official said Friday refugees in Gaza were suffering cash shortages because the extended Israeli-imposed curfews and strikes have kept workers from their jobs.

The Israeli newspaper Haaretz reported the military closures of camps in the strip have disrupted food supplies.

But the official, who insisted on anonymity, told the AP most U.S. supply trucks had been able to continue their deliveries and no one was going hungry in the strip, where 650,000 Palestinians

United States naval fleet must leave the Gulf waters without delay."

In his remarks, Britain's John Birch said the disaster would not have occurred but for the nearly

(Continued on page 5)

Velayati dismisses American compensation as charity

UNITED NATIONS (Agencies) —

Iran dismissed as "a kind of charity" Friday U.S. President Ronald Reagan's offer of compensation for the 290 victims in the shooting down on an Iranian Airbus and again said the attack was premeditated.

At a news conference shortly before the Security Council resumed debate on the tragedy, Foreign Minister Ali Akbar Velayati blasted the offer, noting that Reagan specifically avoided the issue of U.S. responsibility.

"We do not need mercy."

Asked if the downing of Iranair Flight 655 by the U.S. cruiser Vincennes July 3 was premeditated, Velayati said: "The evidence shows that."

U.S. officials contend the skipper of the Vincennes, patrolling the island, "fired at us and ran back to Farsi. I'm sure they came from there," he said.

The raid with rocket-propelled grenades started a small fire in the accommodation quarters, but the crew quickly brought it under control, the captain said. There were no casualties.

Shipping agents in the region said they heard the Sea Victory call for American assistance. A U.S. officer responded immediately and said a warship was on its way.

But Logales said the gunboats were "long gone" by the time the warship and a helicopter arrived.

The Sea Victory was heading in ballast for Kuwait. One shipping expert in the Gulf questioned the captain's choice of route.

"He was asking for it. He should have sailed out of Iran's exclusive zone and closer to the Saudi shore," the expert said.

Iran declared a 12-mile exclusive zone around Farsi in 1984.

Iran withdraws from Haj Omran

NIACOSIA (Agencies) — Iran has staged a new troop withdrawal from northeast Iraq as Baghdad's forces tightened their grip on the southern front after occupying an Iranian border town.

Tehran's official IRNA news agency said Thursday Iranian forces had pulled back from the Kurdish Haj Omran area in northeast Iraq as part of a new strategy aimed

NATIONAL NEWS BRIEFS

CROWN PRINCE THANKS DAJANI: His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan has sent a cable of thanks to Interior Minister Rajai Dajani, in appreciation of the efforts made by the minister and the governors and district officers during Jordan's celebrations of the Great Arab Revolt in June. Prince Hassan said that this year's preparations were unique in their planning and organisation and were commensurate with the importance of that dear occasion.

FAYEZ MEETS SPANISH ENVOY: Lower House of Parliament Speaker Akif Al Fayed Thursday discussed bilateral relations with Spanish Ambassador to Amman Ramon Armengol.

TUNISIAN ENVOY HONOURED: Foreign Minister Taher Al Maari Thursday decorated the outgoing Tunisian Ambassador to Jordan Said Ibn Mustafa with Jordan's Independence Medal of the First Order, which was conferred upon him by His Majesty King Hussein in appreciation of his efforts to promote and enhance relations between his country and Jordan.

TIES WITH SWEDEN: Public Works and Housing Minister Engineer Shafiq Zawaideh Thursday discussed bilateral cooperation with Swedish Ambassador Lars Lonnback.

MEDIA TEAM IN IRAQ: A Jordanian media delegation Wednesday left Amman for Baghdad to cover the Iraqi victories in Al Zubaidat region. The delegation was composed of Information Ministry Advisor Subhail Matalah, Fayed Al Qudah from the Department of Press and Publication, Fares Sharar and Mahmoud Jaber from Jordan News Agency, and Mahmoud Muhammed.

Spectators complain of crowd control problem at Jerash Festival opening

By Nermene Murad
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — The site of the Jerash ruins glittered with the birth of another festival Wednesday while Their Majesties King Hussein and Queen Noor officially opened the 7th cultural extravaganza. But at the South Gate of the city, Jordanians and foreign residents of the Kingdom were treated to a completely different show — of rough behaviour, insensitivity and high handed action.

Complaints poured in to reporters from people from all walks of life, ranging from ambassadors who were officially invited to the opening ceremony, and spectators who carried their tickets to the first opera to be held in Jerash, to the general public who just wanted to renew their alliance with the activities of the festival.

"I was afraid, horrified. I thought I was at a military zone, not a cultural event," said a Jordanian woman who arrived at the site 20 minutes before the opening of the opera as she described her experience with the guards at the gate of the festival. She told the Jordan Times that she saw an ambassador's wife in Amman "being physically shoved back by security officers guarding the gate," yet the lady was holding an official invitation to the opening ceremony and the opera in her hand, and all she "was trying to find out was why they were being held back." An ambassador to Jordan was treated to verbal abuse and "was almost hit," the young Jordanian said.

The Jordanian woman admitted that there was chaos at the entrance, "there were no organised line up," but she maintained that there was absolutely no need for the violence. Most of the people interviewed by the Jordan Times maintained that their feeling was the security guards were "insufficiently trained for crowd control," everybody agreed that the behaviour of the guards at the first day of the festival was a clear example of "unnecessary physical and verbal abuse," and a far cry from what one expects at Jordan's premiere national cultural event.

An eyewitness described to the Jordan Times how one of the guards "took off his belt and started hitting people with it, regardless of who they were and what they were doing," another witness said that some of the guards carried the steel barriers at the gate and shoved people back with them. The pushing, shouting and

threatening were eventually discovered to be without reason, "I thought that Their Majesties were still inside and that this behaviour and attitude were security measures to protect the Royal Family, but we finally found out that everybody had left," one person who was there told the Jordan Times.

The obvious question was why were the guards so adamant to prevent people from entering the site. According to an eye-witness, "there was no explanation, all we were told was to go back, and in many cases those who tried to know more were called abusive names."

This reporter, who arrived one hour before the opening ceremony, was looking for the seats designated for reporters when one guard came over and said: "It is late, leave this place immediately or you will get into trouble." Other senior Jordanian editors said they received the same rough treatment by both uniformed and plain-clothed security personnel.

Local reporters were grouped together in a corner for one hour before the beginning of the opening ceremony, due to "security reasons," and all were satisfied that it was proper procedure, but words of dissatisfaction started spreading among them when five minutes before the opening ceremony foreign reporters were escorted by Foreign Ministry officials to their designated seats in the Jordanian ministers' area.

A Jerash Festival official reached by the Jordan Times Friday, denied responsibility for any of the "accidents," noting that "things went perfectly Thursday, the guards were not on the site of the festival, they were there only on the first day."

Many of those who complained of mistreatment by security guards cited examples of good natured interventions by officials of the Jerash Festival, who tried to minimise aggravation caused by the guards.

"At the entrance to the opera, a guard physically tried to shove me aside when he saw my reporter's badge, but an official from the Jerash Festival intervened and told the guard to let me in," a senior editor who was in Jerash Wednesday with his wife and children told the Jordan Times.

The general attitude by those interviewed was that "Jerash Festival officials tried to smooth the flow of the crowds with the least inconvenience for all," and others who visited Jerash Thursday conceded that "everything was very well organised, there were no harassments."

WHAT'S GOING ON

JERASH FESTIVAL

- Local and Arabic music by Jordan Armed Forces Band at the Forum at 6:30 p.m.
- Poets and poetry at the Artemis at 7:00 p.m.
- National folk dance and music by Al Ballet Krsmanovic de Yugoslavia at the South Theatre at 7:30 p.m.
- Jordanian folk dance by Beit Fajjar Folk Group at the Forum at 8:00 p.m.
- Children's play by Haya Arts Centre at the Sound and Light at 8:00 p.m.
- Modern Filipino dance and music by the U.P. Filipiniana Troupe at the Sound and Light at 9:30 p.m.
- Zanobia Operetta by Zanobia Troupe/Syria at the South Theatre at 9:30 p.m.

EXHIBITIONS

- Housing exhibition at the Plaza Hotel.
- Jordanian-Palestinian heritage week at the University of Jordan. It includes handicraft, costumes, and embroidery.

FILMS

- Video for children: Pippi Langstrumpf. Goethe Institute at 4:00 p.m.

POETRY

- Poetry recitation by Dalal Al Alami and Mohammad Abu Mansour. Abdin Hamid Shoman Foundation at 6:00 p.m.



The camp at Rum



The dinner table is set at Wadi Rum, against a backdrop of illuminated cliffs

Jordan: Land of desert safari?

Rami G. Khouri recently took a safari trip through Jordan's desert. He field the following report and photos:

JORDAN, land of sun, ancient history and... desert safaris. If several enterprising local companies have their way, desert safaris may soon join the growing list of activities and services which are available for foreign and domestic tourists. Last winter, the general manager of the Marriott Hotel, Haile Aguilar, and the director of International Traders Services Company, Munir Nassar, spent two days criss-crossing the semi-arid steppe-like regions of the country exploring routes and destinations for possible desert safaris. Last month they ran the first experimental safari — a four-day, three-night trek of over 1,000 kilometres, nearly two-thirds of which was over desert tracks.

This was not just a romp through the desert, bouldering over desert tracks or sliding and sailing through sandy stretches; the trip started in Amman at 6:30 a.m., and took us first to the desert castles area; we visited Hallabat, Harranah es-Sarah, Amra, Azraq, Kharana and Qasr Tuba, stopping for a lunch of sandwiches, fruits, brownies and hot and cold drinks at Kharana Castle. After Tuba, we drove for another two hours to reach Bayir — one of the most isolated and barren areas of the country, with nothing to see for a hundred kilometres in any direction. Only the desert police post — and an ancient water reservoir — stand as testimony that we were not the first people to visit Bayir, which has served as a caravan stop for thousands of years.

The next morning — after breakfast of scrambled eggs, pancakes, sausages, corn flakes, orange juice, hot coffee and a Granola bar for extra energy — we set off for Jafr, and then across country to Butn al Ghoul ("the belly of the beast"), from where we followed the paved road towards Mudawarrah, in search of one of the wrecks of the Ottoman trains which were blown up by the forces of Prince Faisal al Hussein and Lawrence of Arabia during the Great Arab Revolt in 1916. We found the wreck in the Ramleh area, about 30 kilometres north of Mudawarrah — and we also found one of the most beautiful areas in the Middle East: A vast, pastel land-

scape of soft sandy stretches, with different shades of orange abutting craggy limestone mountains and stretches of basalt ground cover.

From there, we returned to Butn al Ghoul and headed overland to Disi and Rum, following the phosphate railway through a rough, mountainous district dotted with pockets of soft sand. After several more hours of driving through a magical landscape, we arrived at Rum, and spent the next two nights exploring the area from the comfort of our base camp deep within Rum. On the third day, we drove from Rum to Aqaba along a dirt track that passed through the inner reaches of Rum, emerging to meet the desert highway at Wadi Yitam, from where we drove the last 25 kilometres to Aqaba on the desert highway — though given the state of the desert highway, it seemed considerably safer and smoother driving on desert tracks.

The third day ended with a barbecue fish banquet on the beach at Aqaba — where the Marriott van and crew had arrived ahead of time to set up a comfortable tent, full refreshments bar and lunch. After a swim in the Gulf of Aqaba and lunch, we stopped for a fresh shower at the Royal Diving Centre, before driving back to our camp at Rum.

We had planned to drive from Aqaba up through Wadi 'Araba and over the hills to Beidha, to camp out the last night at Beidha, near Petra, though we decided to spend the last night at Rum, to avoid the extra work of breaking camp and setting it up once again. The three first days of trekking

developed, for the fun of Jordanians and foreign visitors alike.

The logistics of trips offered on a commercial basis have to be worked out and refined by international Traders, the Marriott Hotel or whomever else ventures into the field. Shorter or longer itineraries may be offered, and different destinations will be included. But the fact of Jordan's potential as a destination for desert trekkers and desert safaris is beyond doubt, and at least two local companies have shown that they have the technical capability and the entrepreneurial spirit to pull off the incongruous combination of desert trekking in five-star luxury.



A sandy stretch near Disi — great for photographs, not so great for driving through



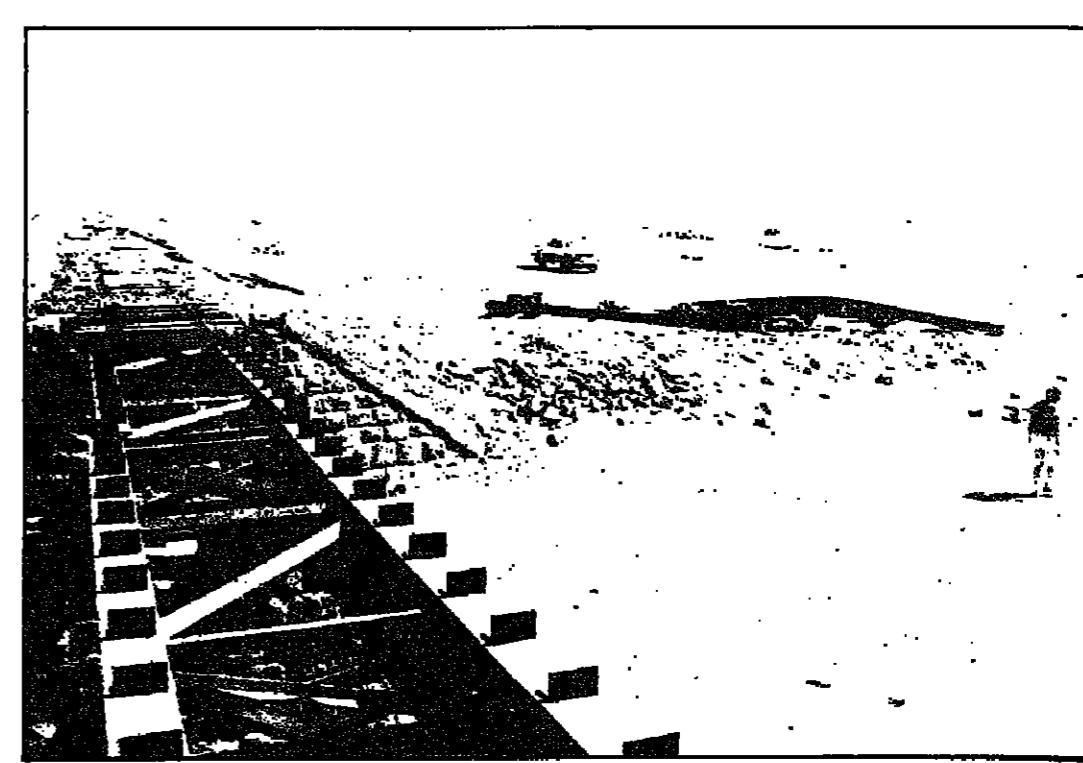
On the way to Bayir



Breakfast at Bayir



The tent and fish barbecue lunch at Aqaba



The wreck of an old Ottoman train, next to the abandoned track at Ramleh, near Mudawarrah

Jordan Times

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Chairman of the Board of Directors:

MAHMOUD AL KAYED

Responsible Editor and Director General:

MOHAMMAD AMAD

Editor-in-Chief:

RAMI G. KHOURI

Editorial and advertising offices:

Jordan Press Foundation,

University Road, P.O. Box 6710, Amman, Jordan.

Telephones: 667171-6, 670141-4, 684311, 684366

Telex: 21497 ALRAI JO

Faximile: 661242

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ARABIC PRESS EDITORIALS

Friday's

Al Ra'i: Israeli terrorists?

THE failure so far of the Greek government to identify the perpetrators of last week's attack on a Greek ship might be taken as preliminary evidence that such a terrorist operation, which was carried out in a perfect and professional manner, must have originated from the Zionist enemy, which has a long and colourful history of such crimes. Any terrorist act, however, can only be identified through its timing and objectives. In light of the escalating Palestinian uprising in the occupied Arab territories, the increasing international support it has gained and the international condemnation of the Israeli oppressive policies, one can simply tell that Israel is the only party which has a genuine interest in such operations. Attempts by some observers to attribute this operation to the Middle East should not imply that it is the Arabs who committed this crime. The operation aims to distort the image of Arabs and to link them with terrorism, particularly nowadays when the uprising has proven to the whole world that it is the Israelis who are terrorists. The Israeli inhuman practices against the Palestinian people in the occupied Arab territories cast no doubt on the identity of the terrorists. The Israeli brutality has surpassed the well-known terrorist regimes of South Africa and other dictatorial and racist regimes. The Palestinian uprising has proven to the whole world that it has over the forty years, since the Israeli occupation of Palestine, been biased, supporting the killer rather than the victim, supporting the wrong against the right and justice. It should be noted within this context that Greece is the current chairman of the European Community and has not recognised the Israeli entity and refused to establish diplomatic relations with it. Therefore, Israel is trying to offend the Arab-Greek relations by committing such attacks and attributing it to Arab parties.

Al Dustour: Strong ties

AT the conclusion of their 4th conference in Amman, the Jordanians working abroad supported Jordan's firm stand towards kinsmen in the occupied Arab territories and praised its role in shouldering its pan-Arab historical responsibilities, saying that such a stand is clearly demonstrated in the limitless support for the Palestinian people and in Jordan's active role on all levels to canvass support for the Palestinian uprising. The convocation at the conference in Amman asserted anew the strong and eternal relation between the country and its citizens, who have never forgotten their original roots and belonging to Jordan. These strong ties have been embodied through the royal directives which called for directing special care to the Jordanian expatriates. The expatriates called on Thursday for all Jordanians working abroad to contribute to the development of their country stressing that development of the country is the joint responsibility of all Jordanians, because the development plan needs the effort and contribution of every one of them.

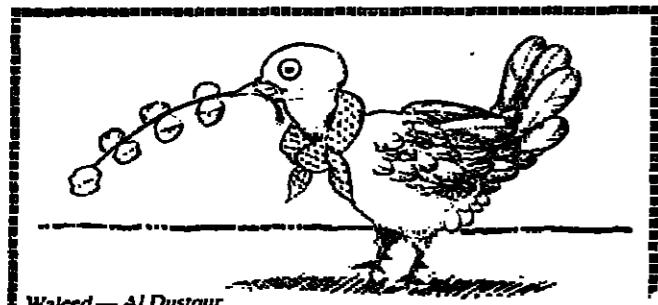
Sawt Al Shaab: Decreased mortality rate

THE medal that the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) has decorated Jordan with in appreciation of its great achievements in the field of reducing infant mortality rate and achieving high coverage of immunisation against child-killer diseases, is a source of pride for us in Jordan, because it demonstrates the government's interest in promoting child health and development. It is also indicative of the tireless efforts made by the Ministry of Health and other parties to achieve such honourable results. UNICEF Executive Director James Grant's congratulatory cable to His Majesty King Hussein over Jordan's achievements, which is a certificate that we take pride in, demonstrates the Jordanian citizen's determination and resolve to enjoy the highly respectable status, which we all aspire to achieve. Jordan's recent achievement puts Jordan in the forefront of the region's countries as far as reducing the infant mortality rate through increased immunisation coverage and control of intestinal diseases. Jordan has been able to reduce the IMR from 75 per one thousand live births to 35 per one thousand live births. In terms of figures Jordan has succeeded in reducing the infant deaths from 8,000 a year in 1980 to 3,600 in 1986. This dramatic reduction in infant deaths should prompt us to work harder to achieve better results to ensure a better and healthy future for the coming generations.

Thursday's

Al Ra'i: Expand debate

THE U.N. Security Council's debate of the downing of the Iranian airliner by the U.S. navy opens up yet another chance for the international community to shoulder its responsibility of ending the conflict in the Gulf. Although we condemn the downing of a civilian plane, we should also point to the Iranian regime's continued acts of terrorism, which paved the way for the downing of the plane. Iran's insistence on pursuing the war with Iraq, its crimes in Mecca during last year's pilgrimage season and its killing of Iraqi prisoners of war and sending thousands of young Iranians to their death at the battle-front are part of Iran's crimes committed against humanity. The council should not settle to only by discussing the downing of the plane, but should rather tackle this issue as part of the on-going Gulf conflict, and should take into serious consideration Iraq's extended hand for peace with its neighbour.



Al Dustour: Deep-rooted changes

THE uprising in the occupied Arab territories is eight months old; and seems to be continuing with more resolve and greater force than ever. A British social worker living and working in the Arab territory under Israeli rule said that the Palestinian revolt has been able to survive due to close coordination among all factions in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip and the determined effort on the part of all people to confront the Israelis and to thwart their designs and conspiracies. The Palestinians, according to the British social worker, have been able to unify their ranks and to work independently, completely severing links between their territory and the Jewish state. This development has come about in view of the long sufferings and the repressive rule the Palestinians have been subjected to over the past 21 years. These deep-rooted changes within the occupied territories have prompted the Israeli leaders to admit that the revolt might go on for many years. The Palestinian revolt will continue unabated and regardless of the challenges, until freedom is achieved.

Iraq: Looking beyond the war

By Frederick W. Axelgard

IRAQ appears to have begun the process of adjusting to a new way of life in anticipation of an end to the Gulf war. This tentative conclusion results from an analysis of changes in Iraq's military, economic, and political circumstances in recent months. It suggests that the government of Saddam Hussein and the Iraqi people themselves are approaching the end of a national trauma and the beginning of one of the most important (and possibly most difficult) periods of Iraq's modern history — that of economic reconstruction and social and political revitalisation, following the brutal war with Iran.

In the months following, Iranian efforts to recruit new fighters fell far short of their objectives. When political developments in various international forums (including the Arab League and United Nations) also turned to Iraq's favour, the leadership in Baghdad reportedly concluded that Iran had exhausted its material, political, and spiritual resources.

Its conviction of Iran's incapacity of pursuing another massive offensive spurred Iraq's innovative counterattacks at Fao and Shalamsha, this same conviction has failed to stir any similar creativity in Iraq's leaders with respect to diplomatic manoeuvres.

After Iraq's liberation of the Fao peninsula, the Reagan administration pressed Iraqi diplomats in New York and Washington for signs of flexibility in Iraq's approach to implementing Security Council Resolution 598. Presumably, the purpose of such flexibility would be to give the U.S. greater leverage to deal with Soviet and Chinese unwillingness to impose sanctions on Iran for failing to accept 598.

Baghdad proved unresponsive to this suggestion. Vernon Walters, the U.S. ambassador to the United Nations, made no further headway when he went to Iraq in late May to make the case directly to the Ba'athist leadership. Iraqi and American sources alike confirmed that after a vigorous exchange, the only result was that each side had a clear and emphatic appreciation of the other's viewpoint.

The Iraqi position was understood and formalised immediately after Walter's visit by the "Baghdad peace conference." This meeting involved over a thousand representatives of non-governmental organisations from around the world in an effort to mobilise support for the implementation of Resolution 598. It lasted three days and featured the Shalamsha operation as even more impressive, since Iraqi statements and manoeuvres after Fao clearly pointed to a counter-attack in the Basra region. In addition, Iraq has since beaten back an Iranian attempt to regain the ground lost at Shalamsha.

Iraqi officials brush away questions about the emergence of Iraqi military prowess at a point so late in the war. Foreign observers, they suggest, have long given Iraq too little credit for years of stopping offensives involving hundreds of thousands of Iranian fighters, at least one third of whom were completely ready to give their lives.

Moreover, Iraqi leaders are said to have foreseen the demise of Iranian capabilities as early as Iran's takeover of the Fao peninsula in February 1986. Despite Iranian efforts to endow the Fao victory with mythical propor-

tions, it achieved, in Iraq's estimation, neither important strategic nor spiritual objectives. Iranian fighters mobilised with the promise of seeing the holy shrines of Najaf and Karbala were posted to a dreary waste of mud and salt water.

Similarly, the attacks on Basra in early 1987, while threatening, cost Iran between 250,000 and 400,000 casualties in just four months of fighting, according to Iraqi estimates. This devastation was wrought when some five million Iraqi artillery shells were launched into the relatively compact area of fighting east of Basra. In the months following, Iranian efforts to recruit new fighters fell far short of their objectives.

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Japan displays new activist foreign policy

By David Thurber
The Associated Press

for it to play a more activist and independent international role.

A ministry official, who spoke on condition of anonymity, said Japan selected the Middle East and Southeast Asia regions because it has close ties to both and feels it can make significant contributions there.

During a trip to the Middle East in June, Uno became the first Japanese cabinet member to visit Israel. Japan had avoided visits in the past in part to keep the world's largest aid donor.

But after several years of discussions in the Japanese government about the need for it to take a stronger, more self-confident diplomatic role to balance the country's economic muscle, Japan now has committed itself to a greater involvement in peace efforts in both the Middle East and Southeast Asia.

Japanese Foreign Minister Sosuke Uno, in Bangkok this past week for the annual meetings of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), called for a series of steps toward a peace settlement in Cambodia, and told ASEAN foreign ministers that Japan will "actively consider" providing financial support for a proposed international peacekeeping force there.

Uno also said Japan will consider sending civilian personnel to a separate international team that would monitor free elections in Cambodia after the withdrawal of Vietnamese troops. Hanoi, which invaded Cambodia nearly 10 years ago, has pledged it will remove all its forces by 1990.

The financial support, expected to be sizable, would be the first major grant from Japan for an international peacekeeping force, foreign ministry officials say.

Japan "intends not only to expand its contributions in the economic field, but also to embark on new forms of contributions in the political and diplomatic fields," Uno told foreign ministers from Thailand, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, Indonesia and Brunei.

Independent role

Since World War II, Japan has relied heavily on the United States for both military protection and foreign policy directions. It frequently has been cautious about taking too active an international role, particularly in Asian countries that still remember its aggression during the war.

But diplomats and government officials in Japan say a new generation of foreign ministry officials who have lived much of their lives in prosperous postwar Japan now believe the time has come

LETTERS

'A night to remember'

To the Editor:

STANDING outside the gate at 20:30 hrs on Wednesday at Jerash, the word "stampede" kept coming to my lips, because unfortunately this is what we were suddenly transformed into a body of panic-stricken cattle.

I am sure that there was a good reason for not letting the people in, but it would have been more "civilised" if someone had the decency to say: "well folks we are sorry but you cannot go in before 21:00 hrs," instead of trying to intimidate and shove around innocent people.

Jerash festival is supposed to see Jordanian culture intermingling with other cultures but the image we gave of Jordan at the doorstep of our ancient city cannot but make me feel ashamed and apologetic towards all Jordanians and foreigners who were standing there too stunned for words, and those who made the effort to come to Jerash.

Yes it was a night to remember with a bitter sense of hurt pride, disgrace and shame, even though Rigoletto was divine.

Muna Kassab-Nabeel

Deep concern

To the Editor:

I AM Italian, but consider myself a Jordanian also. I was born in Amman and my family relationship with Jordan stretches back to five generations, a relationship of love and respect. My grandmother is buried here, and I chose to come back to Jordan in my 50s because this is home.

Libya proposes fusion of five Maghreb states

ALGIERS (R) — Libya has proposed a union of five Maghreb states sharing a common flag, currency and defence and foreign policies.

The Libyan representative at the talks between Algeria, Tunisia, Libya, Morocco and Mauritania also suggested a common leadership, or "command council," in a plan presented after the meeting opened Wednesday, conference sources said Thursday.

Government ministers and officials from the five states, who were holding a follow-up meeting to their first five-way summit last month, each presented a plan for better regional cooperation.

The proposals are to be presented in a common document at a later summit.

But diplomats were sceptical that Libya's far-reaching proposals would receive support from the four other states.

By contrast, other proposals at the meeting were limited, focusing on increased economic cooperation, as well as free movement of goods and people in the region, delegation sources said.

Libya, which has pursued an unsuccessful policy of unions with other states in pursuit of an ideal of uniting the Arab World, suggested a common flag in green, red and white, emblazoned with stars and crescents.

The five Maghreb states would also have a common currency under the Libyan plan, the

Maghreb dinar, the sources added.

Details of the make-up and powers of the proposed "command council" were unclear, but the Libyan plan envisaged common foreign and defence policies for the five.

"We consider that unity is now possible in the Maghreb," said one Libyan delegate, adding that Libyan leader Muammar Qadhafi was concentrating on uniting the western Arab World as a first step towards full Arab unity.

Algeria and Libya announced last month that a proposed union between their states is to be submitted to their countries in September, but sources in both delegations said this would not be in the form of referendums, as at first understood.

The proposals for union would be submitted for public debate in national media, the sources said, adding that this debate would help decide what form any union would take.

Libya forged mergers with Morocco and Tunisia, which collapsed in 1986 and 1974 respectively. Qadhafi's other failed unions include ones with Egypt, Sudan and Syria.

Expert sub-committees are to be formed as a result of the two-day Algiers talks attended by the number two in Algeria's ruling party, Mohammad Cherif Messaadia, Tunisian Prime Minister Hedi Baccouche and Moroccan Foreign Minister

Abdul Latif Filali.

Qadhafi sent senior envoy Kholoud Hamadi and Mauritania was represented by senior government official Sidna Ould Mohammad Sidia.

The sub-committees would discuss greater cooperation in the institutional, economic, social and financial fields, as well as education and research.

They are due to meet in the next few months in the various Maghreb capitals before another high-level meeting is held in October, the sources said.

At the present talks Algeria and Tunisia laid most stress on economic aspects, the sources said.

Morocco emphasised the need for free movement of people in the region, possibly with a common identity card, and Mauritania made general suggestions for better coordination between states.

A communiqué issued at the end of the talks said a similar meeting would be held in Rabat Oct. 24.

Conference sources said Morocco proposed at the meeting the creation of a supreme council of the five heads of state, meeting annually with a rotating presidency.

It also suggested the creation of a council of foreign ministers, as well as a research group to study ways of achieving Maghreb unity, they added.

Japanese navigation scheme gets ahead

KUWAIT (R) — Kuwait and Saudi Arabia will soon begin erecting advanced navigational beacons in a Japanese-funded scheme to help ships pick their way through dangerous Gulf waters.

The Japanese Foreign Ministry announced earlier this week that Saudi Arabia and Kuwait had agreed to join the project, Tokyo's contribution to international efforts to safeguard Gulf shipping from attacks by warring Iran and Iraq.

Japan imports most of its oil from the Gulf and is the top trading partner of nearly every state along its western coast.

When the United States and Europe sent dozens of warships to the region last year, Japan came under pressure to help. Last October it offered to finance a \$10-million, British-designed precise navigation system.

Shipping sources said a team from the British radar systems firm Racal had arrived in Kuwait and began scouting sites for the beacons, which emit signals to let warships and merchant vessels pinpoint their position with greater accuracy.

"They'll know exactly where they are at any given time," one source said. More than 70 merchant ships have come under attack so far this year by either Iran and Iraq.

The system will be especially useful in helping ships stay clear of known mines. Systems now used in the Gulf have a margin of error as high as half a mile, the source said.

Last year's naval build-up followed the discovery of dozens of mines in the waterway. Iran was widely blamed.

The sources said the solar-powered beacons, some 35 metres high and topped with red warning lights, would also help minehunters from the United States and five West European nations operate more efficiently by identifying exactly where they had swept.

It is not our role to go to war with Iran," said the letter obtained Thursday by the AP.

"We believe the ultimate solution to the Iranian problem must come from within Iran itself," said the letter. "The people of the country must remove Khomeini and the mullahs and replace them with a government that is more humane to its own citizens and

China denies selling ballistic missiles except to S. Arabia

PEKING (Agencies) — China has assured the United States that it has not sold ballistic missiles except to Saudi Arabia, U.S. Secretary of State George Shultz said Friday.

He told reporters that no agreements had been reached but the issue of missile sales was raised in his talks with top leader Deng Xiaoping, Communist Party chief Zhao Ziyang and Premier Li Peng.

The Chinese told me they have not made any sales of ballistic missiles to a country other than Saudi Arabia," he said.

China remained in March that it had sold non-nuclear medium-range missiles to Saudi Arabia.

Western military experts said these were believed to be the CSS-2, an adaptation of the long March-1 rocket which has a range of about 3,200 kilometres.

The Los Angeles Times, quoting Western experts familiar with China's weapons exports, has reported from Hong Kong that a sale of missiles to Syria had been completed.

China has denied it offered to sell missiles to Syria and has countered U.S. accusations that it

sold Silkworm missiles to Iran.

Peking has become the world's fifth largest weapons exporter in a bid to help earn hard currency needed to pay for its ambitious programme of economic modernisation.

"I feel myself that it is very undesirable to have ballistic missile technology or ballistic missiles themselves spreading around," Shultz said.

"This is a subject I brought forward to the Chinese and we discussed it at some length," he said. "We didn't come to any agreements about it but it has been worthwhile to talk about it."

Shultz did not comment on China's assurances but he added: "This is a subject that will continue to be on our agenda."

In a letter sent Thursday a group of 111 U.S. Congressmen told Shultz to warn China that indiscriminate arms sales in the Middle East would jeopardise

U.S. cooperation in technological and military matters.

On Thursday, Shultz met for

more than three hours with Foreign Minister Qian Qichen for what the American side characterised as "a very good exchange" on such issues as Kampuchea and the proliferation of weapons sales in developing countries.

Qian reportedly told Shultz

that China, which according to U.S. figures sold about \$2 billion worth of arms last year, sells only defensive weapons that contribute to peace and regional stability.

Israeli protest

In another development, Israeli Foreign Minister Shimon Peres protested Thursday to Britain's new ambassador to Israel

about its multi-billion-dollar arms sale to Saudi Arabia, a ministry spokesman said.

The meeting, a courtesy call, was Ambassador Mark Elliott's first with Peres since taking over the post three weeks ago.

Asked if this was an official protest, foreign ministry spokesman Alon Liel said: "Peres used the word 'protest.' I don't think there is anything more official than that."

Israel says the latest British-Saudi deal, estimated to be worth between \$20 and \$30 billion, threatens its security.

Beilin says Shultz plan 'valid'

MADRID (AP) — The Israeli foreign ministry's top political affairs official expressed support Friday for the Middle East peace plan promoted by U.S. Secretary of State George Shultz and said the next U.S. administration should take it as its point of departure to resolve conflicts in the region.

Speaking at a breakfast with reporters, Yossi Beilin insisted that Israel considered Shultz's currently stalled initiative "valid" and said the new American administration resulting from November elections should follow up on it.

Beilin, the ministry's director general for political affairs, began an official visit to Spain Thursday for a series of talks with Spanish Foreign Ministry officials on the situation in the Middle East and bilateral relations.

Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir has resisted the Shultz plan's call for resolving the Arab-Israeli conflict and the seven-month-old Palestinian uprising in the Israeli-occupied territories through an exchange of land for

peace.

Beilin is a longtime associate of Israeli Foreign Minister Shimon Peres, the leader of the Israeli Labour Party and a supporter of negotiating an exchange of land for peace in the occupied territories.

The Moroccan and Algerian foreign ministers recently visited the Spanish capital to call on Spain "to do everything it can" within the EEC and during its presidency of the community to push for an international peace conference at which the PLO would serve as the sole representative of the Palestinian people.

Beilin told reporters Friday he believes Spain, due to its traditionally close ties with Arab countries, could play an important role in any peace conference to resolve the Arab-Israeli conflict.

He told the paper both parties, however, rejected direct negotiations with the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO), at least until the PLO rejects "its terrorist positions" and recognises Israel.

Spanish news reports said the timing of Beilin's visit was related to Spain's scheduled turn next

Velayati rejects U.S. compensation offer

(Continued from page 1) eight-year-old war between Iran and Iraq and the council must do its utmost to end the conflict in accordance with its resolution adopted almost a year ago.

"Let us do something now to save this generation from

No specific Shultz plan to visit region

(Continued from page 1)

would include 40 F-18 jet fighter planes.

The Senate has voted to block the Mavericks. Sheikh Saad said Kuwait was a peace-loving country and wanted the arms for self-defence.

"It doesn't mean we intend to invade any other country," he said.

Over the weekend, Kuwait announced an arms deal with the Soviet Union. "So," Sheikh Saad said, "don't be surprised when you read tomorrow or next week or next month that Kuwait also has bought military equipment from Moscow, or Britain or France."

He also was seeing members of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee to try to reverse the opposition to the Mavericks.

In another development, Bassem Abu Sharif, the PLO spokesman who called recently for direct negotiations with Israel, said Wednesday he has been invited to the United States by two non-governmental institutions to discuss Arab-Israeli peace.

But Abu Sharif, an advisor to PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat, said he was "prepared to visit Washington to elaborate further on my paper," but admitted that the State Department has not yet agreed to grant him a visa.

In an interview with the AP in Baghdad, Abu Sharif said the invitations came from the Washington-based Brookings institutions and the National Press Club.

Abu Sharif said the PLO's Executive Committee discussed his paper in Tunis last week and approved it on the basis it did not contradict the conditions for dealings with Israel — mutual, simultaneous recognition.

source of war," Birch said.

When the Security Council opened its session Thursday, U.S. Vice-President George Bush blamed Iran for responsibility in the missile attack.

Bush did not dwell on details of the Iranair incident in his 30-minute address, but defended the U.S. presence in the Gulf and the decision of the ship's captain.

The critical issue confronting this body is not the how and why of Iranair 655," Bush said. "It is the continuing refusal of Iran to... negotiate an end to the war with Iraq and to cease its acts of aggression against neutral shipping in the Persian Gulf."

Bush's appearance before the

council was his first in more than 14 years, since he was U.S. ambassador to the United Nations under former President Richard Nixon.

U.N. officials said they could not remember an appearance by such a high-ranking U.S. official in Security Council debate.

U.N. spokesman Francois Giuliani announced Thursday that Iran and the 15 members of the Security Council had agreed that council President Nogueira Batista would draft a document in consultation with Iran and the members of the council, which include the United States.

On Thursday, diplomatic sources said Foreign Minister Francisco Fernandez Ordóñez reiterated Spain's support of self-determination for the Palestinian people and an international peace conference to end the Arab-Israeli conflict in a 30-minute meeting with

Athens (R) — A Palestinian hijack suspect, whose detention in Greece may have prompted a bloody attack on a tourist ship, was sentenced to seven months in jail Thursday for entering the country with a false passport.

A court handed down the sentence on Mohammad Rashid, 34, who is wanted by the United States for a bomb attack on a Pan American Airlines plane in 1982 which killed four people.

Rashid told the court: "I am a fighter for a group that belongs to the PLO (Palestine Liberation Organisation). My struggle is confined to the occupied lands."

A Greek police have been investigating the possibility that a guerrilla assault on a Greek tourist ship Monday was staged to blackmail authorities into releasing Rashid.

Nine people were killed and 98 wounded when guerrillas opened fire with sub-machine guns and threw grenades on the pleasure boat City of Poros as it neared Athens.

Lawyers for Rashid said they would appeal against the verdict and that he would stay in prison pending the appeal. Greek officials have said they are studying an American request for extradition.

Rashid is also suspected of involvement in a bomb attack on a Trans World Airlines plane over Greece in 1986 which killed four people.

Rashid told the court: "I am a fighter for a group that belongs to the PLO (Palestine Liberation Organisation). My struggle is confined to the occupied lands."

A police officer told the court Rashid was arrested last May. After checking his finger-prints they found he had been arrested in Athens in November 1973 for trying to smuggle in 15 kilos of hashish.

He was sentenced then to 10 years in jail but released in 1976 and left the country, the police officer said.

The Palestinian insisted that he had never been in Greece before and that his name was that given on the forged passport — Mohammad Haddad Hallil.

"Even if the passport is forged, the name is right," he told the court. "It is only natural that my passport was false. We Palestinians do not have a country."

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Trade figures boost dollar

LONDON (R) — Better-than-expected U.S. trade figures sent the dollar soaring Friday and drew renewed open market intervention by central banks anxious to brake a powerful rally by America's currency.

The United States said its May trade deficit was \$10.93 billion. That was up on April's revised \$10.3 billions, but markets had expected a trade gap around \$11.5 billions.

Wall Street stocks scaled back early gains. But in currency markets, the figures were viewed as good news for the U.S. economy and as a signal to buy more dollars.

"The market was looking for an excuse to buy the dollar and it hasn't been persuaded not to," said Warren Oliver, U.S. economist at London brokers Phillips and Drew.

A rebound by the dollar from historic lows touched in January, which has accelerated in recent weeks, had already taken it up to around 1.85 Deutsche marks and 134 yen.

Traders cited a U.S. boom and the way U.S. interest rates had been nudged higher, giving a better return on dollar assets, to dampen a risk of inflation inherent in the boom.

Friday's trade figures sent the dollar on up to quoted highs

around 1.88 marks and 135.35 yen in wild trading. The pound sterling shed three cents to \$1.6625.

The U.S. Federal Reserve, West Germany's Bundesbank, the Bank of England, Swiss National Bank, and also the central banks of Australia, Belgium, Italy and the Netherlands all sold dollars to try to tame the hectic rally.

It has risen 18 per cent against the mark and around 11 per cent against the yen since then, and is now at its highest against the mark since last August.

It has not been as strong against the yen since December.

The gold price in London's afternoon was being quoted around \$440 an ounce, somewhat firmer from the morning.

Such leading world stock markets as Tokyo and Frankfurt were closed before the United States announced the May trade figures.

In London, traders marked prices up but the rally was quickly ambushed by operators looking to any gain as a chance to cash in profits.

The FTSE index of 100 blue chip British stocks in London's mid-afternoon was around 1,856 points, down seven on the day.

In New York, the Dow Jones industrial average opened a third of a point down at 2,113.26.

U.S. lending rate rises

NEW YORK (AP) — Big U.S. banks raised their prime lending rate Thursday to the highest level in more than two years, a half-percentage point rise to 9.5 per cent that signalled more expensive loans for consumers and businesses.

It was the second boost in the key lending rate this year and reflected the banks' own costs of borrowing money, which has been rising steadily over the past few months.

The prime is watched closely because bankers use it as a basis for calculating loans to businesses and for determining many types of fixed and adjustable-rate consumer loans, including popular

home-equity loans.

Chase Manhattan Bank in New York was the first to announce the rate increase and was quickly followed by other big banks, including Citibank, First National Bank of Chicago, Bank of New York and Manufacturers Hanover.

The last increase in the prime was on May 11, from 8.5 per cent to nine per cent. The increase Thursday put the prime at the highest point since March 1986.

Reaction in the financial markets was muted, partly because a rise had been widely expected.

The prime rate rise came one day after Federal Reserve Chairman Alan Greenspan warned he

would move to tighten credit if inflation started to accelerate.

Testifying in Congress, Greenspan said that the United States' central bank "at this juncture might be well advised to err more on the side of restrictive rather than stimulus."

There has been growing evidence that inflation could rise significantly this year. Low unemployment, strains on America's productive capacities and rising commodity prices caused by the drought point to higher consumer prices in the months ahead.

Many economists have predicted that interest rates would rise slightly this year but do not believe the increase will be dramatic.

The law covers all companies employing five or more people,



Jordanian officials (left) review the social security system with Egyptian delegation. (Petra photo)

Jordanian, Egyptian officials discuss social security law

AMMAN (Petra) — Social Security Corporation (SSC) Director General Mahdi Farhan Thursday held talks with a visiting Egyptian ministerial delegation, currently on a visit to Jordan, to organise Egyptian manpower in Jordan and discuss their conditions on the social security law.

Farhan said that the SSC covers all Jordanian and non-Jordanian workers and provide them with the same rights and privileges. He noted that the number of workers covered by the social security as at the end of June 1988 was 475,000 in addition to government employees and personnel of public institutions, municipalities and universities.

The law covers all companies employing five or more people,

Farhan said. On inter-Arab cooperation in the field of social security, Farhan said that Jordan, in its capacity as chairman of the Arab Social Security Corporations' Group, has acted as a host for a meeting of directors during which it was agreed that an Arab union, grouping all Arab social security corporations be formed and that bilateral and joint cooperation be enhanced through holding periodic seminars.

However, he added, Jordan seeks to expand the umbrella of social security to cover countries of the Organisation of Islamic Unity (OIC).

Farhan said Jordan welcomed the establishment of an Arab social security system that guarantees rights of Arab labour-

ers everywhere in the Arab World, and pointed out in this regard that Jordan gave equal rights to all Arab workers.

He further said that Jordan pays indemnity to eligible labourers who complete two years of contributory service before their return to their home country.

However, for workers who opt to leave the country before completing two years of contributory service, their entitlements could be transferred to them after the lapse of two years, subject to a written request by the labourer concerned to this effect.

The Egyptian delegation is headed by Ambassador Mohamed Ismat Rida and groups representatives for the immigration ministry, passport department, foreign ministry and interior ministry.

Saudis deny oil output increase

RIYADH, Saudi Arabia (Agencies) — Saudi Arabia issued its second denial in as many days Thursday over oil market talk that the kingdom intends to boost production to meet the bill for a recently signed multibillion-dollar arms deal with Britain.

The kingdom, in a statement distributed by the official Saudi Press Agency, charged that it was the victim of an "artificial information campaign... by oil brokers and their agents in the market."

"The kingdom strongly denies the truth of such charges and wishes to reaffirm its full commitment to its assigned level of production by OPEC," the statement said.

"We find that certain circles are still insisting on charging the kingdom with the fall in oil prices as a result of the British arms deal," said the statement attributed to an unidentified "responsible source."

Wednesday, Oil Minister Hisham Nazer issued a statement denying talk that the kingdom would raise its oil production to cover the cost of the deal for U.K.-made Tornado jet fighters, other military equipment and construction projects reportedly worth at least \$17 billion.

The budget is expected to be completed toward the end of the calendar year. The ceiling would allow total spending to grow 910 billion yen (\$6.8 billion) to around 33,890 billion yen (\$255 billion) in 1989/90.

A "memorandum of understanding" on the Saudi-U.K. arms deal was signed on July 3 and reports stated that Saudi Arabia intended to pay for the arms with oil.

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They threatened more protests if the government went ahead with its plans. State-employed agriculturalists have already begun a 10-day strike to press for better pay.

The protests followed the government's announcement last month that it planned to privatise loss-making state enterprises, limit state subsidies to 10 essential items and lift subsidies from top-quality wheat-flour.

The government said the moves were designed to revive the agriculture-based economy, burdened by a foreign debt of nearly \$12 billion, five years of war against rebels in the south and persistent drought.

The bankers and economists said the government's plans met key demands set by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) to give the go-ahead to major donors to help finance a four-year economic recovery plan.

They said, however, the Khar-

Ministry signs 2 contracts for Ruweished pilot project

AMMAN (Petra) — The Ministry of Agriculture Thursday concluded two agreements with a local consulting company and a joint venture company to carry out construction work worth JD 90,000 at the Ruweished pilot project technical staff and other personnel, while the joint venture company will construct two earthen dams of a capacity ranging between three and five million cubic metres to store rain water and provide drinking water for the area residents.

The agreements were signed by Agriculture Minister Marwan Al Hinoud and the two companies respective directors.

Trade union protests hit Sudan

KHARTOUM (R) — Sudan is facing a wave of trade union protests that bankers and economists say might slow down the pace of economic reform.

The Union of Accountants and Cashiers said Thursday it would start a five-day strike Saturday to press demands for improved employment terms. They said the stoppage would cost the treasury 43.5 million pounds (\$9.5 million) in lost revenue.

Members of 22 trade unions, spearheaded by the Union of Bank Employees said they planned to defuse a government ban and stage a protest march, Monday against plans to privatise four state-owned commercial banks.

They threatened more protests if the government went ahead with its plans. State-employed agriculturalists have already begun a 10-day strike to press for better pay.

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AMMAN EXCHANGE RATES

Thursday rates			
Local	buy	sell	in fils
Belgian franc (for 10)	94.71	95.6	99.0/100.0
Dutch guilder	175.61	177.4	10.9/11.0
French franc	58.81	59.4	1.05/1.06
Italian lira (for 100)	26.71	27.0	150.0/153.0
Japanese yen (for 100)	274.21	278.0	1310.0/1320.0
Swiss franc	57.6	58.2	165.0/165.5
U.K. sterling pound	618.4	624.6	101.5/101.6
U.S. dollar	365.4	369.4	960.0/965.0
W. German mark	198.2	200.2	985.0

LONDON EXCHANGE RATES

LONDON (R) — Following are the buying and selling rates for leading world currencies and gold against the dollar at midday on the London foreign exchange and bullion markets Friday.	One Sterling	1.6820/33	U.S. dollar
	One U.S. dollar	1.2072/82	Canadian dollar
	1.8545/55	Deutschmarks	
	2.0895/0905	Dutch guilders	
	1.5380/90	Swiss francs	
	38.76/81	Belgian francs	
	6.2480/2520	French francs	
	1374/1375	Italian lire	
	133.88/98	Japanese yen	
	6.3680/3730	Swedish crowns	
	6.7310/60	Norwegian crowns	
	7.0630/80	Danish crowns	
	438.70/439.20	U.S. dollars	

WORLD STOCK MARKETS

SYDNEY — The share market clawed its way back to a firmer close for the first time in three days, although brokers said trading was fairly lacklustre. The All Ordinaries index rose 6.3 to 1,622.5.

TOKYO — Prices closed down after a day of wide fluctuations as investors initially tried to shrug off concerns ahead of the release of U.S. May trade figures. The Nikkei index fell 170.29 to 27,913.79.

HONG KONG — Stocks closed off the day's lows because of short-covering by institutional investors ahead of the May trade figures. The Hang Seng index fell 12.26 to 2,740.70.

SINGAPORE — Stocks closed higher across the board on continued speculative buying and bargain-hunting in moderate trading. The Straits Times Industrial index rose 12.54 to 1,130.96.

BOMBAY — Shares closed mixed in poor trading hit by end-of-account considerations, with state-owned financial institutions the only buyers. Associated Cement dropped 4.5 rupees to 218 and Tata Steel 7.5 to 70.

FRANKFURT — Prices ended a quite bourse with modest net gains. The Dax 30-share index rose 4.19 to 1,191.40.

ZURICH — Prices closed little changed in fairly quiet trading, with most investors staying on the sidelines before the U.S. trade data. The Swiss index rose 0.9 to 887.

PARIS — Prices started the floor session firmer in very thin trading, with many operators taking a long weekend after the Bastille day holiday.

LONDON — Share prices were mostly easier in late trading but above the lows earlier in the session, as buying for the new account boosted sentiment. At 1430 GMT, the FTSE 100 was down 6.2 to 1,857.1.

NEW YORK — Wall Street stocks turned slightly lower in mid-morning amid weak bond prices and despite a strong dollar. The market had opened firmer on a slightly smaller than expected May trade deficit. The Dow was down four at 2,110.

JORDAN BUSINESS DIRECTORY

Ministry of Industry and Trade	663191	Jordan Commercial Centres Corporation	603507
Ministry of Supply	603121	Free Zones Corporation	642001
Ministry of Planning	636321	Amman Financial Market	660170
Ministry of Labour	644466	Amman Chamber of Commerce	661511
Ministry of Communications	663186	Amman Chamber of Industry	644747
Ministry of Agriculture	639391	Association of Banks in Jordan	644228
Ministry of Finance	636321	Jordan Association of Insurance Companies	647370
Central Bank of Jordan	6300		

SPORTS IN BRIEF

UEFA reduces Michel's 9-match ban to 3

GENEVA (R) — Real Madrid midfielder Michel Gonzalez has had nine-match ban reduced to three games. The European Football Union's (UEFA) appeal board Thursday also reduced a three-match ban on Real's Mexican striker Hugo Sanchez to one match. A 75,000 Swiss francs (\$50,000) fine on Real for team misbehaviour was upheld. Michel's suspension, which would have kept him out of Real's entire European Cup campaign next season, was for abusing Swiss referee Bruno Galler after the Spanish club's semi-final second leg tie at PSV Eindhoven in April. Sanchez was banned for the same offence. The five-member board, chaired by Swiss Leon Straessle, heard evidence from Michel, Galler and Real Madrid officials in a 40-minute session. They reached their decision after a further one-and-a-half hours discussion.

Mortimore to manage Belenenses

LISBON (R) — Former Benfica manager John Mortimore will return to Portugal next season after a year's absence to take over Belenenses, the Lisbon club said Thursday. The 53-year-old Englishman resigned shortly after guiding Benfica to the league and cup double in 1987, an achievement eclipsed by the European Cup triumph of northern rivals Porto. Mortimore signed a two-year contract with Belenenses who finished third in the league and will join their more famous neighbours, Benfica and Sporting, in the UEFA Cup.

AOF to appeal to Cash

SYDNEY (R) — Australian Olympic officials will appeal to Pat Cash's patriotism in an attempt to persuade the former Wimbledon champion to play tennis for his country at the Seoul Olympics. Kevan Gospar, president of the Australian Olympic Federation (AOF), said he was disappointed by Cash's decision to withdraw from the Australian team but hoped he might change his mind. "He's dropped the ball on us but maybe it's not too late to pick it up again," Gospar said. "Athletes are always responsible to themselves first but I believe great athletes are also responsible to other people. I respect his decision as a professional but the problem could escalate with other young professionals modelling themselves on him and turning away from the Olympic Games."

Souness signs Everton's Stevens

LONDON (R) — Free-spending Glasgow Rangers manager Graeme Souness has taken his outlay in two years to seven million pounds sterling (\$11.8 million) with the signing of defender Gary Stevens from Everton. Stevens signed for the Scottish Premier division club for one million pounds (\$1.68 million) Thursday night. In his two years as manager, Souness has negotiated more than 30 transfer deals, bringing in top players such as present and past England internationals Terry Butcher, Chris Woods, Trevor Francis and Ray Wilkins. Stevens, also an England player, said: "I'm thrilled with this move. It's a big challenge and I hope I can rise to it. It also gives me a chance to play in European football."

Australia renews 1996 Olympic bid

SYDNEY (AP) — Sydney will be chosen for the 1996 Olympics instead of Athens, which cannot guarantee adequate security measures, a sports official said Thursday. Bob Rowland Smith, New South Wales state sports minister said Athens, venue of the first modern Olympics in 1896 was unlikely to be chosen as 1996 host city by the International Olympic Federation



"A new organ-donor card. When you're gone I want to give your bad breath to a needy skunk."

Baseball Standings

NEW YORK (AP) — Major league standings after Thursday games:

National League

East Division

	W	L	Pct.	GB
New York	54	34	.614	—
Pittsburgh	50	37	.575	3 1/2
Montreal	46	41	.529	7 1/2
Chicago	45	42	.517	8 1/2
St. Louis	38	49	.437	15 1/2
Philadelphia	36	50	.419	17

West Division

	W	L	Pct.	GB
Los Angeles	50	36	.561	—
San Francisco	46	40	.535	4
Houston	45	43	.511	5
Cincinnati	42	46	.477	9
San Diego	40	49	.449	11 1/2
Atlanta	30	55	.353	19 1/2

American League

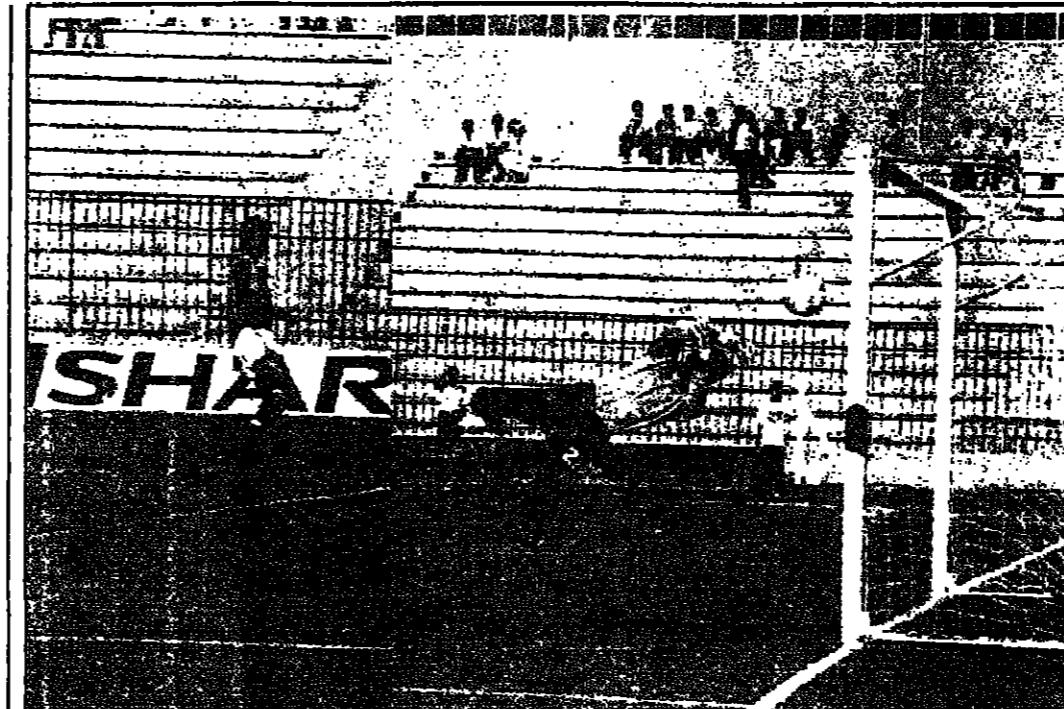
	W	L	Pct.	GB
Detroit	52	34	.605	—
New York	50	36	.591	2
Minneapolis	45	43	.511	8
Boston	43	42	.506	8 1/2
Cleveland	45	44	.506	8 1/2
Toronto	43	46	.483	10 1/2
Baltimore	29	60	.326	24 1/2

West Division

	W	L	Pct.	GB
Oakland	54	35	.607	—
Minnesota	48	39	.552	5
Kansas City	41	52	.529	7
City	42	46	.477	11 1/2
California	41	47	.466	12 1/2
Chicago	40	47	.460	13
Texas	35	53	.398	18 1/2

East Division

West Division



Saudi goalkeeper Al Shater tries in vain to save a goal from Iraqi striker Ahmad Radi (left) in Friday's match between Iraq and Saudi Arabia (Photo by Issa Abu Othman).

Uphill task lies ahead of Milan to become Eurochamp after 20 years

GENEVA, Switzerland (AP) — AC Milan's Dutch-powered soccer team faces a tough trek to Bulgaria as it sets out to end 20 barren years and become European champion again.

Spearheaded by three of the Dutch stars who won the European Championship for nations last month, the Milan side is one of the favourites to lift the Champions' Cup next May — 20 years after it last won the trophy.

Following Tuesday's draw for the three European club competitions, however, a tall first hurdle stands in the way of Ruud Gullit, Marco van Basten, Frank Rijkaard and the rest of the team, in the form of the uncompromising Bulgarian champion, FC Vitosha.

Coinciding with other first-round games in the Champions' Cup Winners' and UEFA Cup competitions, the two teams meet Sept. 7 in Sofia with the leg in Milan Oct. 9.

"We know nothing of Vitosha (formerly Levski Spartak) and I cannot dare any prediction," said Milan's manager, Arrigo Sacchi.

In the Cup Winners' Cup, holder FC Mechelen of Belgium,

which upset Ajax in last year's final, should progress to the second round at the expense of neighbouring Avenir Begeen of Luxembourg.

Mighty Barcelona, which won the Spanish Cup despite an indifferent season in the league, must travel to Iceland for the first leg of its first round match-up with Fram Reykjavik.

Barcelona, one of the world's glamour clubs, was the team fans of Derry City wanted to draw. Instead, it will cross the Irish sea to play Cardiff City.

In the UEFA Cup, West German holder Bayer Leverkusen faces Belenenses of Lisbon in the first round, while Italy's Napoli, featuring Argentinian ace Diego Maradona, is paired with Paok Salonic of Greece.

West German powerhouse Bayern Munich has a first round game against Legia of Warsaw, while Italy's Juventus, another of Europe's biggest names, faces the comparative unknown force of Otelul Galati of Romania.

Mecir bows to Muster

STUTTGART, West Germany (Agencies) — Thomas Muster, the impressive young Austrian tennis player who won the U.S. Pro Championship in Boston Sunday, eliminated top seed Milosav Mecir of Czechoslovakia from the \$350,000 Stuttgart Grand Prix tournament Thursday.

He beat Mecir, a Wimbledon semifinalist two weeks ago, 6-4, 7-6 (10-8) in a third-round baseline duel which lasted two hours 12 minutes. Muster, 20, defeated 15th seed Jordi Arrese of Spain in the second round.

Muster, who said his win over Mecir was important but less so than his victory over American Lawson Duncan in the U.S. Pro final, now plays ninth seed Guillermo Perez-Roldan of Argentina in the quarterfinals.

Perez-Roldan beat eighth seed Emilio Sanchez of Spain 6-4, 6-3 in this third-round match Thursday.

Muster credit-ed his recent success to an improved attitude and mental training. He concentrated on returning the ball and paid no attention to who he was playing.

"I used to be scared playing against top people," he said. "Now I know I can beat anybody."

Muster, whose groundstrokes are among the heaviest on the Grand Prix circuit, won the first three games to establish control of the opening set. In the second, he was 2-4 down but broke back immediately and won on his second match point.

McNeil beats Frazier

In Newport, Rhode Island, second-seed Lori McNeil overcame five service breaks Thursday and defeated 15-year-old Amy Frazier 6-3, 6-4, in the second round of the \$200,000 Virginia Slims of Newport tennis tournament.

Lea Antonoplis upset seventh-seed Gretchen Mager 6-4, 6-7 (5-7), 6-3. Antonoplis is ranked No. 151 in the world, while Mager is ranked No. 52.

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Jordan reserves semifinal berth

By Sa'd G. Hattar
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — The Jordanians regained their "lost pride" Thursday evening by edging veteran Algerians (2-1), and won a Group B ticket to the semifinals of the Fifth Arab Soccer Championship. Lebanon stayed on track, within Group A, to the top of the ten-country tournament and Syria topped Group B.

For Jordan, it was a feat long overdue, which could have otherwise signalled the end of the host country's talented squad, having lost to young Kuwaitis (1-0) and tied inexperienced Bahamians (0-0).

The Iraqis overpowered the Saudis (2-0) Friday evening, a day after the Saudis received their first setback when they lost (1-0) to Lebanon. Jordan stepped up the pace from the early beginning and dominated the field for most of the match, to the cheers of approximately 25,000 capacity crowd at the Amman International Stadium. The midfielders produced a number of scoring chances to the attackers who failed to take advantage of them and all attempts in the first half went to the second half.

Iraq's two goals Friday came in the first half and they maintained control throughout the second half pressuring the Saudis in their defence zone.

Lebanon and Egypt, from Group A, were playing late Friday and both teams have the chance to stay in the race to the semifinals.

Iraq now tops Group A with four points from three heats. Lebanon and Egypt each has three points from two meets. Tunisia netted two points from three matches and Saudi Arabia retained its one point from two games.

Group B is led by Syria which deserved five points from three games. Algeria follows with four points from four meets and Jordan has four points from three matches. Kuwait and Bahrain each netted two points from three games.

NHL Devils hopeful of signing Soviet star

no reason to think otherwise... he is very keen to play with the Devils."

The 29-year-old was captain of the gold medal-winning Soviet team at the Calgary Olympics. The Devils have the right to sign the best defenceman at the World Ice Hockey Championships, would be the first Soviet player to leave for North American with his country's blessing.

The Devils' Lou Lamoriello travelled to Moscow last month to try and conclude a deal with Fetisov and came close, but was told he would be summoned back after a few more details were ironed out.

"It seems as though they are still going to stay with what they said — they will release him," Lamoriello said from his New Jersey office in a telephone interview Wednesday. "...it is just a matter of getting everything such that they are convinced this is the right thing to do."

"But there is nothing negative. Everything is very positive. I feel he will be in a Devils uniform (for the 1988-89 season). That was the way I felt when I left there. I have

nothing to do."

Fetisov's signing could boost the Devils' standing in the NHL, in which the club reached the Stanley Cup semifinals this year for the first time in its history.

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The Ministry of Supply of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan is inviting International Firms specialised in manufacturing, supply, erection and commissioning of Grain Silo installations as the leading main contractors to obtain prequalification forms for the construction, equipping and commissioning of Grain Silo Extension Projects in Juwaideh and in Aqaba. The main contractors are required to name local contractors as sub-contractors to do part of the work. These local sub-contractors shall be classified in first grade "Buildings."

Armenians pose fresh challenge to Moscow

MOSCOW (R) — Strikers infuriated by a Soviet television portrayal of Armenians as hooligans shut down Yerevan airport Friday in a fresh challenge to authorities seeking to quell ethnic unrest.

A spokesman for the official Armenian news agency told Reuters from Yerevan, the Armenian capital, that airport workers had closed the facility in protest against the "one-sided" programme aired Thursday night.

Soviet soldiers interviewed on the programme said they were battered by rocks and bottles when they moved into the airport to end a two-day blockade last week. A youth was shot dead and 36 people were seriously injured in the airport clashes.

"It was a one-sided, false programme aimed at discrediting the republic," the spokesman said. "The airport workers reacted negatively to that programme and in protest went on strike."

No Armenians were interviewed on the programme, which was aired after midnight by state television. One soldier, interviewed in his hospital bed, described the July 4 airport blockade as "a well-organized provocation."

He and other troops alleged

that the action, staged in protest over the Nagorno-Karabakh regional dispute, had been controlled by "hooligans" and the troops acted in self-defence.

At least 36 people have died in ethnic turmoil over Nagorno-Karabakh, the Transcaucasian region which this week declared it was seceding from Azerbaijan to join Armenia. Most of its inhabitants are ethnic Armenians.

In Yerevan, Armenians have

supported the region's stand through mass demonstrations and a general strike called July 4. Some 200,000 people rallied in central Yerevan Thursday.

"I expect today's demonstration to be even larger because of that programme," the Armenian spokesman said. He said the city centre was calm in the morning, with many factory employees going to work.

It was not immediately clear whether troops would be sent back to the airport. Troops were deployed in Yerevan twice last week and then pulled back to the capital's outskirts.

WORLD NEWS IN BRIEF

34 killed in Ethiopia blast

ADDIS ABABA (AP) — Thirty-four people were killed when their bus triggered a landmine explosion in northern Ethiopia, the state-run Ethiopian news agency reported. The blast occurred in an area where government troops have been fighting two separate rebellions. The news agency said 39 people also were injured in the explosion Thursday 90 kilometres south of the Eritrean capital Asmara along the Asmara-Mekelle highway, one of Ethiopia's main northern arteries for trade and relief aid. The news agency said the bus was completely destroyed and described the accident scene as "gruesome and horrifying."

Nixon urges Bush to pick Dole

WASHINGTON (AP) — Former U.S. President Richard Nixon says George Bush should look to Senator Robert Dole, his former rival for the Republican Party presidential nomination, as a running mate. Even if Bush and Dole have their differences, Nixon said, they are twins compared to the Democratic Party ticket of Michael Dukakis and Lloyd Bentsen. Nixon, in a memo prepared for Bush advisors, listed three Republican vice-presidential possibilities: Dole, Representative Jack Kemp of New York or California Governor George Deukmejian.

Sri Lanka's UNP wins 3 elections

COLOMBO, Sri Lanka (AP) — President Junius R. Jayewardene's governing United National Party (UNP) won three of four parliamentary by-elections with narrow margins over opposition candidates, according to results announced Friday. The UNP's victory was expected to pave the way for general elections and a presidential poll later this year. It is widely believed the by-elections were called by Jayewardene to test his party's popularity. The ruling party won the Katugampola, Kekirawa, and Wellawata seats. It was defeated in the Ratnapura constituency by the Sri Lanka Freedom Party. The polling was held Thursday in the four districts scattered through central Sri Lanka.

U.S. stops issuing Nicaraguans visas

MANAGUA (AP) — The U.S. embassy announced Wednesday it has temporarily stopped issuing tourist visas to Nicaraguans, claiming a shortage of U.S. personnel. "We just don't have enough bodies," embassy spokeswoman Jan Hartman said in making the announcement. The loss of U.S. diplomats stems from the leftist Sandinista government's order Monday to expel U.S. Ambassador Richard Melton and seven other diplomats. Melton left Tuesday for Washington.

Meese to join 2 thinktanks

WASHINGTON (R) — Attorney General Edwin Meese said Thursday he would join the Heritage Foundation and the Hoover Institution, two conservative thinktanks, when he leaves the Reagan Administration next month. Meese, who has been under investigation by a special prosecutor over allegations of using his influence to help his friends, announced last week he would resign in late July or early August. He said a soon-to-be-released report from independent counsel James McKay had "completely vindicated" him of wrongdoing.

YOUR DAILY HOROSCOPE

From the Carol Fligher Institute

GENERAL TENDENCIES: There are unusually beneficial influences at work all day and through the night for putting your finest talents into motion to help yourself and others. You are filled with inspiration to work hard.

ARIES (Mar. 21 to Apr. 19) If you have planned thoroughly, whatever you do today will prove advantageous for a long time to come. Impress your ideas on others.

TAURUS (Apr. 20 to May 20) Today is a fine time to try to get others to empathize with your ideals. Your eloquence is at a peak. Invite some friends in tonight.

GEMINI (May 21 to June 21) You can speak very convincingly today and should divulge some information that you have held dear until now. This can be helpful to all.

MOON CHILDREN (June 22 to Jul. 21) Order your priorities and make real progress on what is most important to you today. Listen to an expert who has worked for similar goals.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 21 to Feb. 19) An unexpected opportunity for advance may come from someone very powerful today. Work on making agreements with your associates.

PISCES (Feb. 20 to Mar. 20) Work on reconciling differences with those who you usually work closely with, and the day should progress quite productively.

Study your most personal needs and pursue them with confidence. Work to improve your relationship with your mate.

LIBRA (Sept. 23 to Oct. 22) Keep your activities casual today, and you can learn a lot. Be polite and charming, and later it will be easier to realize your wishes.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23 to Nov. 21) Get out and take some risks today for results that are most gratifying. Do your weekend shopping early.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 to Dec. 21) Look closely around you for new opportunities that may have escaped your attention. Those of a different background can help you.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 to Jan. 20) You can reach an understanding on a grave matter with your mate today. Study your business interests carefully.

ARIES (Mar. 21 to Apr. 19) You have planned thoroughly, whatever you do today will prove advantageous for a long time to come. Impress your ideas on others.

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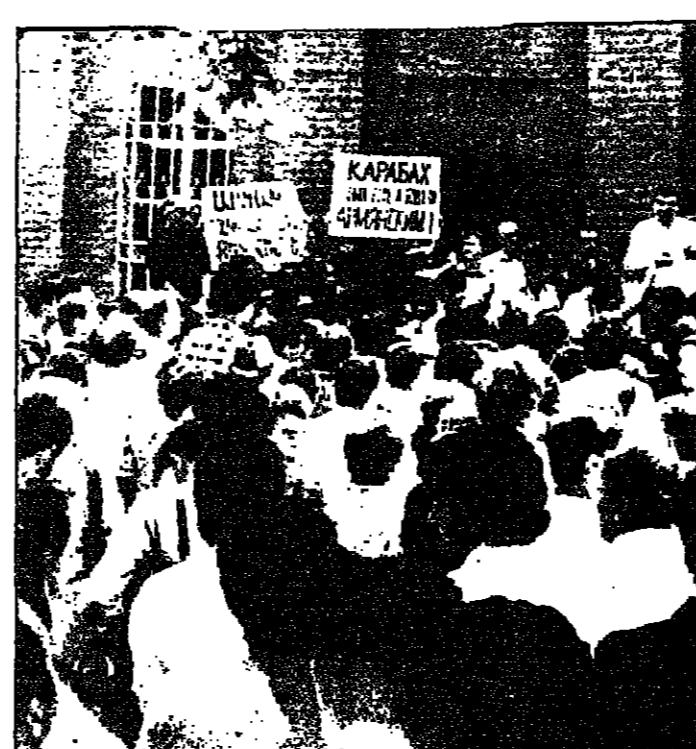
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VIRGO (Aug. 22 to Sept. 22) Don't be afraid to ask for help from close friends in order to get things accomplished. Personal relations are in unusual harmony today.

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Armenian protest in Moscow after the Communist Party conference

The spokesman said he did not know whether the Armenian delegation to a meeting of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet, due to discuss the Nagorno-Karabakh crisis Monday, had managed to leave for Moscow by plane as scheduled Friday.

He said some speakers at the Thursday rally indicated they would accept a proposed compromise solution under which Nagorno-Karabakh would be transferred to Central Soviet control pending its joining Armenia at a later date.

Last week airport workers disagreed over Yerevan's general strike, but demonstrators from the city centre invaded the airport and prevented planes from landing or taking off.

"It was a one-sided, false programme aimed at discrediting the republic," the spokesman said. "The airport workers reacted negatively to that programme and in protest went on strike."

No Armenians were interviewed on the programme, which was aired after midnight by state television. One soldier, interviewed in his hospital bed, described the July 4 airport blockade as "a well-organized provocation."

He and other troops alleged

that the action, staged in protest over the Nagorno-Karabakh regional dispute, had been controlled by "hooligans" and the troops acted in self-defence.

At least 36 people have died in ethnic turmoil over Nagorno-Karabakh, the Transcaucasian region which this week declared it was seceding from Azerbaijan to join Armenia. Most of its inhabitants are ethnic Armenians.

In Yerevan, Armenians have

supported the region's stand through mass demonstrations and a general strike called July 4. Some 200,000 people rallied in central Yerevan Thursday.

"I expect today's demonstration to be even larger because of that programme," the Armenian spokesman said. He said the city centre was calm in the morning, with many factory employees going to work.

It was not immediately clear whether troops would be sent back to the airport. Troops were deployed in Yerevan twice last week and then pulled back to the capital's outskirts.

The blockade was ended when troops forcibly evicted the demonstrators. Khachik Zakaryan, 22, was killed by a plastic bullet and 96 people needed medical treatment.

"There would have been no incidents at the airport if the demonstrators had not been provoked," the Armenian spokesman said. "Women were throwing bottles at us. The mood was extremely aggressive."

The troops, one of whom had a bandage round his head, made no mention of their use of plastic bullets.

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"We had orders to clear the airport," a uniformed officer trainee said. "Women were throwing bottles at us. The mood was extremely aggressive."

The troops, one of whom had a bandage round his head, made no mention of their use of plastic bullets.

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